CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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REPORT OF AMBASSADOR GERALD E. SHANNON OF CANADA ON CONSULTATIONS ON THE MOST APPROPRIATE ARRANGEMENT TO NEGOTIATE A TREATY BANNING THE PRODUCTION OF FISSILE MATERIAL FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR OTHER NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES

At the beginning of last year's session, I was tasked with seeking the views of members on the most appropriate arrangement to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

As you know, I held numerous consultations, both bilaterally and with groups and reported formally to this plenary on five occasions in 1994. Mid-way through the last session, consensus was reached that the CD was the appropriate forum to negotiate a treaty on this issue. At the end of the session in September, while there was no agreement on a mandate for an ad hoc committee, there was agreement, in principle, that an ad hoc committee be established on this issue as soon as a mandate had been agreed. At that time, the CD asked me to continue consultations on an appropriate mandate for an ad hoc committee in order to enable the convening of this Ad Hoc Committee as soon as possible.

At the beginning of this year's session, the Conference decided to continue consultations on a mandate.

I have since held numerous consultations, and am pleased to report that delegations have agreed that the mandate for such a committee should be based on resolution 48/75L of the United Nations General Assembly, and reads as follows:

1. The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an ad hoc committee on a "ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

2. The Conference directs the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

3. The Ad Hoc Committee will report to the Conference on Disarmament on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1995 session.

During the course of my consultations, many delegations expressed concerns about a variety of issues relating to fissile material, including the appropriate scope of the Convention. Some delegations expressed the view that this mandate would permit consideration in the Committee only of the future production of fissile material. Other delegations were of the view that the mandate would permit consideration not only of future but also of past production. Still others were of the view that consideration should not only relate to production of fissile material (past or future) but also to other issues, such as the management of such material.

It has been agreed by delegations that the mandate for the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee does not preclude any delegation from raising for consideration in the Ad Hoc Committee any of the above noted issues.

Delegations with strong views were able to join consensus so we could all move forward on this issue. This means that an ad hoc committee on cut-off can be established and negotiations can begin on this important topic. This has for some time been the common objective of all delegations of this Conference.

I have appreciated the productive contribution and support of all delegations in arriving at this result.